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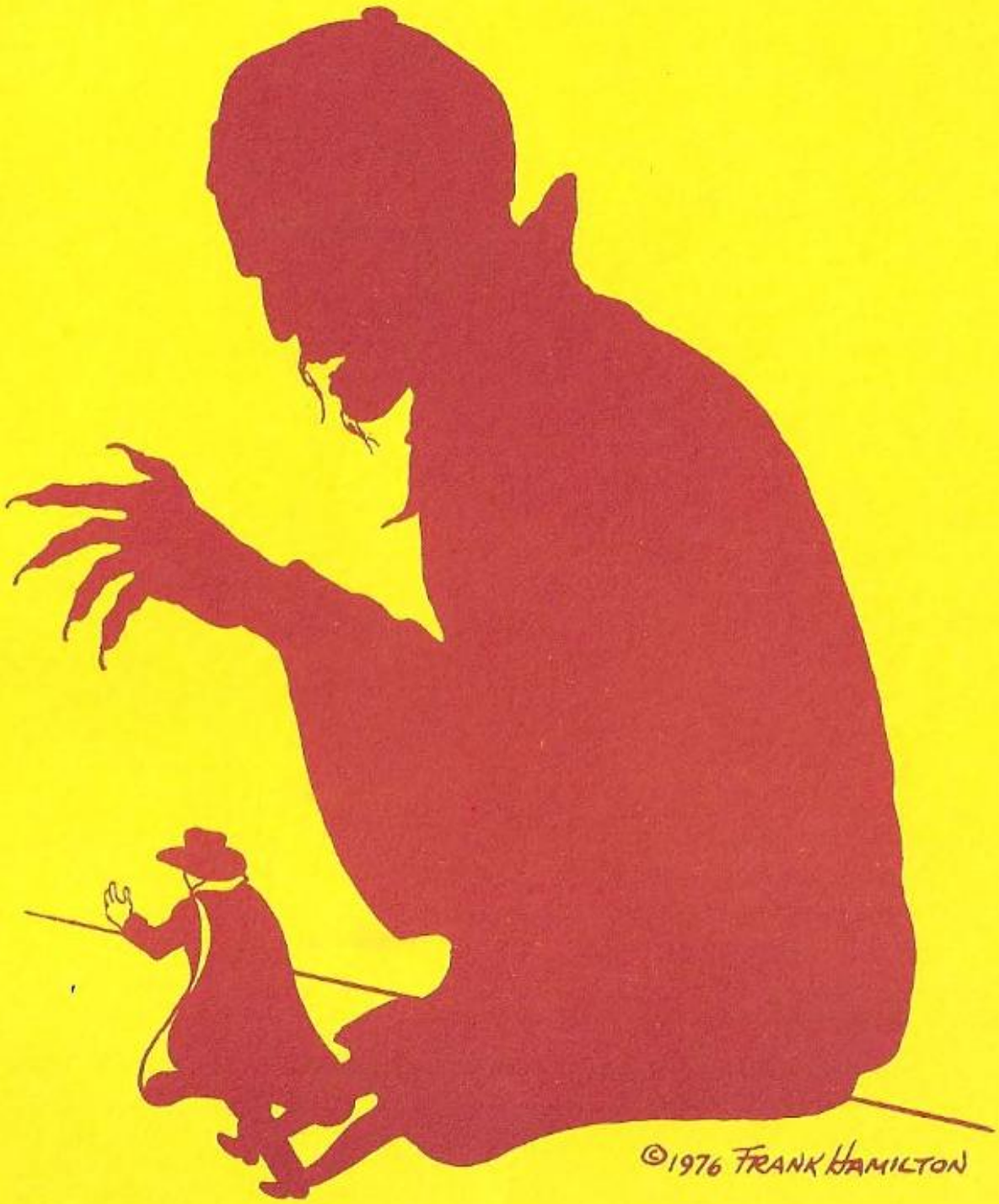


No 16

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

It will already be apparent that this is another "special" issue of the *Review*. It is given over entirely to Frank D. McSherry's long account of the battle between The Shadow and his Oriental antagonist, the Golden Master, and of its parallels in other areas of detective fiction. The article is enhanced by some of the best illustrations ever done by artist Frank Hamilton. I am grateful to both Franks for the opportunity to feature their work in the *Review*.

The subject matter for both text and illustrations was, of course, provided by Walter B. Gibson, the man behind The Shadow. Gibson is an accomplished magician and author of many books on conjuring and stage magic. He was a friend of Harry Houdini, and has written *Houdini's Escapes* and *Houdini's Magic* (both currently available as Bantam paperbacks), as well as *The Original Houdini Scrapbook* (Corwin/Sterling Publishing Co., 1976). He is the creator of two magician/detective characters, Norgil the Magician and the Great Gerard. He was an admirer and acquaintance of Sax Rohmer. A long and fascinating interview with Gibson is contained in issue #2 of *Duende*, edited by Will Murray. [$2.00 per copy, from Odyssey Publications, P. O. Box G-148, Greenwood, Massachusetts 01880.] The interview is accompanied by eight more of Frank Hamilton's superb drawings.

Subscribers whose subscriptions to *The Rohmer Review* end with the current issue (#16) should be aware that the next issue, #17, is being published simultaneously with this one. Those whose subscriptions extend into the next series will receive #16 and #17 in the same envelope. For the others, a renewal notice and return envelope are enclosed. I hope you will want to continue your support of the magazine.

In #17 things are "back to normal"---Rohmer reprints, information on books new and old, bibliographies, and Irregular-style commentary.

The Shadow of Fing Fo

by

Frank D. McSherry, Jr.

I.

The Master met his Moriarty. Doc Savage, Man of Bronze, crossed swords with John Sunlight, the criminal genius with an orangutang's strength, a poet's face and a murderer's soul. Private detective Nero Wolfe dueled to the death with crime organizer Arnold Zeck. And the Shadow met the Golden Master, Shiwan Khan.

As Rome faced Hannibal, the series hero of fiction usually faces once in his career an enemy so capable, intelligent and deadly that both hero and reader alike fear that he has met his match at last. To combat this opponent the hero is forced to exert all his capacities, mental and physical, to their utmost limits---and even then the issue is in doubt.

"He is the Napoleon of crime," said Sherlock Holmes of his great adversary, Col. James Moriarty.

> "He is the organizer of half that is evil and of nearly all that is undetected in this great city. He is a genius. ... He has a brain of the first order... . His agents are numerous and splendidly organized. Is there a crime to be done ... the word is passed to [him], the matter is carried out. The agent may be caught ... But the central power which uses the agent is ... never so much as suspected. ... It seemed impossible to get evidence which would convict in a court of law. You know my powers, my dear Watson, and yet at the end of three months I was forced to confess that I had at last met an antagonist who was my intellectual equal." [1]

Both realize how such a battle between two so evenly matched opponents is likely to end, and neither will back down. "You hope

to beat me," Moriarty says. "I tell you that you will never beat me. If you are clever enough to bring destruction upon me, rest assured that I shall do as much for you." [2]

"You have paid me several compliments," Holmes replies. "Let me pay you one in return when I say that if I were assured of the former eventuality I would, in the interests of the public, cheerfully accept the latter." [3]

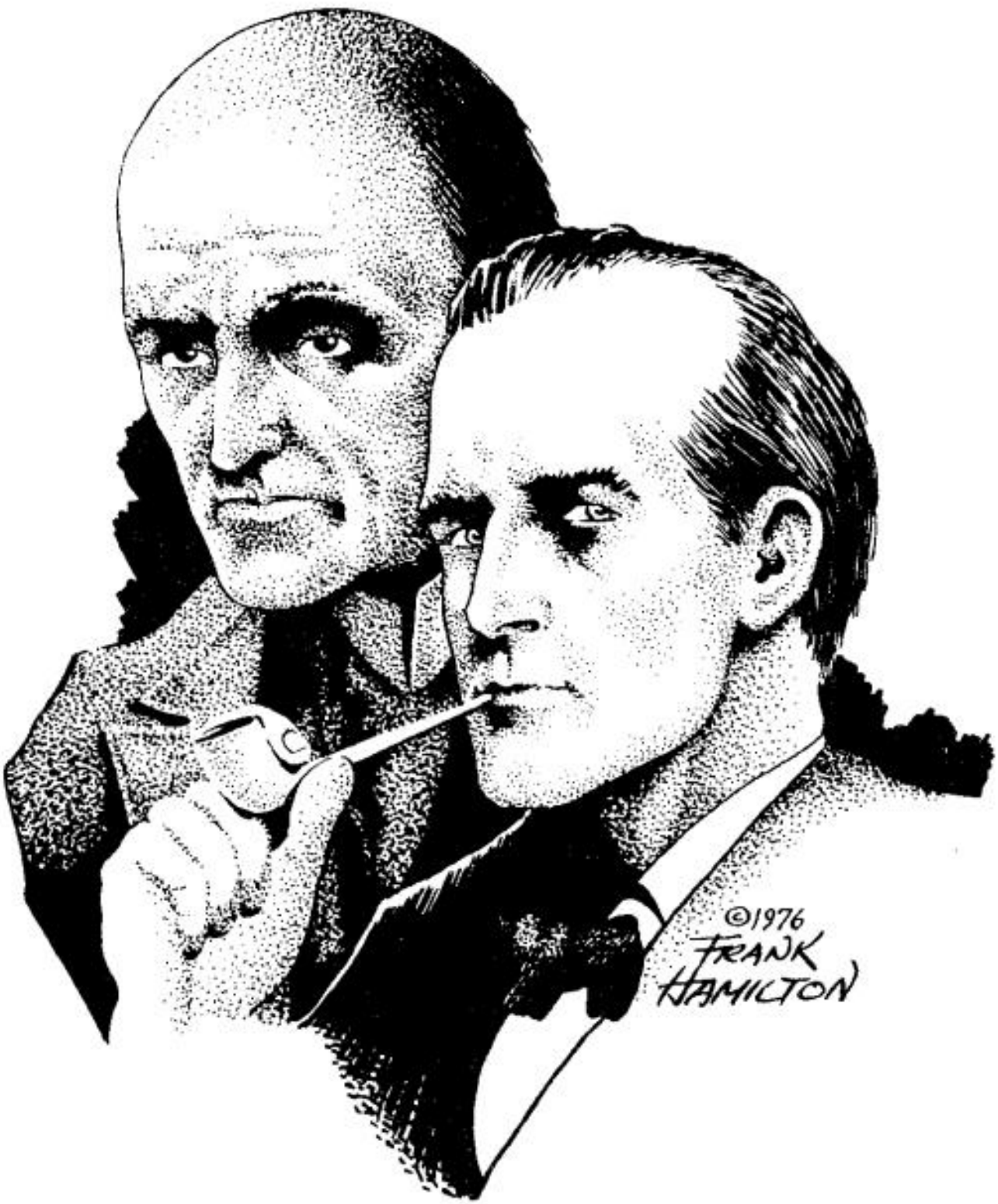
Indeed, when the final combat occurs, high in the Swiss Alps on a cliff's edge above the great falls of Reichenbach, the world believed for years that both fell to their deaths at the conclusion of their hand-to-hand struggle.

When, some sixty years later, New York private detective Nero Wolfe encounters a similar master organizer of crime, the sinister Arnold Zeck, he recognizes the calibre of his opponent and the possible outcome of their clash: "He is the most dangerous man in America." [4] "The moment I must move against him he will know it is a mortal encounter, and he does not underrate me---I only wish he did." [5] His tough assistant, Archie Goodwin, is impressed. "I have seen Wolfe tangle with some tough bozos in the years I've been with him, but none of them ever had him talking like that." [6]

John Sunlight, who "had been put on this earth so that men could be afraid of him" [7], presented an identical problem for the scientific genius and adventurer Clark Savage, Jr., whose "life work was dedicated to attending to such men as John Sunlight, preferably before they managed to get too near their goal." [8] The task is made even more difficult because Sunlight has found Savage's secret scientific laboratory, The Fortress of Solitude, and is thus able to use Savage's own advanced devices and weapons against him. The discovery shakes Savage, as his associates note: "They had never before seen the bronze man this disturbed." [9] "John Sunlight...," says Savage, "is probably as complete a fiend as we ever met." [10]

Their clash climaxes in a hand-to-hand combat in the Fortress, a giant blue dome set in the frozen wastes of the Arctic. Sunlight, a tall thin man who looks like a poet, surprisingly exhibits a physical strength equal to Savage's own and survives that first encounter---the only one of Savage's opponents ever to do so. Two months later he returns for a second attempt, and finally, in an eerie, all-white room on the roof of the world, Savage manages to end the criminal career of John Sunlight.

The longest-lasting and perhaps the most popular of all the pulp heroes was The Shadow, the fighter against crime whose black garb---swirling cloak, gloves and slouch hat pulled low over a hawk-nosed face and burning eyes---gives him a near-invisibility in the night-time shadows. His great antagonist had powers far exceeding those of John Sunlight, and it took The Shadow four separate tries before he was able to destroy the remarkable Fu-Manchu-like man who called himself the Golden Master.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II.

The two antagonists first cross swords in a novel, "The Golden Master" by "Maxwell Grant" (Walter B. Gibson), in the September 15, 1939, issue of the pulp magazine *The Shadow*.

Paul Brent, technical expert for Globe Aircraft, is watching a neon sign outside the window of the hotel room so generously and mysteriously reserved for him by an unknown person, when an odd thing happens. The neon lights, outlining a bird with slowly flapping wings, seem to fade, and Brent loses consciousness.

He wakes to the sound of a Chinese gong and finds himself in another hotel, miles across town, with a dead man at his feet and a smoking gun in his hand. Brent recognizes the murdered man, a former stunt pilot and adventurer who had unsuccessfully tried to enlist Brent's aid in cheating an unnamed Chinese in an aircraft sale. A beautiful Chinese girl in native costume takes the gun from the stunned Brent, and only the opportune arrival of The Shadow prevents his being framed for a murder he did not commit.

What happened during the half hour missing from Brent's life? Outside of a feeling that if he could just recall a certain Name everything would be explained, he can remember nothing... .

Back in his hotel room he discovers to his horror that he has criminally altered an order for Globe airplanes, replacing a few standard civilian planes by many of the firm's most advanced fighter aircraft, powered by a new top-secret motor meant only for U. S. Air Force use. Amnesia, neurosis---or something worse?

Only slowly does The Shadow learn the truth behind these events, as he follows the clue of Ceylon rubies locked in a dead man's hand to discover a new menace out of the Orient---Shiwan Khan, the self-styled Golden Master, who has combined the physical science of the West with the mental sciences of the East. Using flickering lights to mechanically intensify hypnotic states, the Golden Master can control minds at a distance, reading men's thoughts and ordering them to kill and steal---and then to forget both the order and the man who gave it.

How can anyone arrest and convict a man whose crimes are performed under remote influence, and whose victims have forgotten that he even exists? How can he be located, when merely watching the flickering lights guarding his headquarters brings the watchers under his mental control?

One of The Shadow's agents, trapped in this way, learns more about this dangerous scientific genius:

> After meeting Shiwan Khan face to face, one retained a mental picture of him as a being clothed in a robe of dull gold. ... The saffron color of Shiwan Khan's face was the exact hue of the room lights. ... Wide at the forehead, the face tapered to a pointed chin. Set in the center of that triangle was a thin, straight nose that stood as sharply as a ruled line. Beneath thin eyebrows that curved

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almost to the temples were green eyes that had a catlike glow.

Thin mustaches hung down from his upper lip, and on his chin was a slight dab of whiskers. ... From lips that were ... streaks of brown, his voice ... broke the hush like tinkles of a bell. [11]

A student who had attained high rank among the masters of mental sciences in the forbidden city of Lhasa, high in the guarded fastnesses of Tibet, the Golden Master is a direct descendant of Genghis Khan, conqueror of the world, and plans a career that will far surpass the dreams of that great ruler.

"You shall serve me!" says Shiwan Khan. "I promise you a vast reward. You shall come with me to the heart of Asia, to the underground city of Xanadu, where the sacred river Alph runs through measureless caverns, into a sea where the sun never shines! ... Thoughts are things. Sometimes they are sent 'on the wind', as we say ... Once, a fragmentary vision of the famed city, Xanadu, reached an English poet, Coleridge, who wrote his impressions. The words of a dream? No! The description of a vision!

"I, Shiwan Khan, have again discovered the lost city of Xanadu!" [12]

Here Kubla Khan, the son of the great conqueror, had placed the fabulous golden hoard of Genghis Khan, the wealth of a world taken by conquest. Shiwan Khan plans to use that wealth for his plans of renewed conquest. Xanadu is being made into a secret military base from which the vast air fleets he is now forming will fly to control the world.

Shiwan Khan then gives the mentally-controlled agent orders to kill The Shadow---then releases him, to wait for The Shadow's death at the hands of one of his own most trusted agents. Shiwan Khan thus demonstrates his calibre as an antagonist: he is not content merely to avoid a trap, but manages to turn the trap against the one who set it.

A true leader, Shiwan Khan will do anything that he asks his network of agents to do. In fact, when we first meet him he is out in the field himself:

A figure in darkish gray had crossed the sidewalk ... apparently confident that the drab hue of his attire would render him unnoticed. He was by no means invisible, but his outline was vague, much like a camouflaged pattern. Even his saffron face ... could have been a portion of the ... yellow brick that formed the house wall.

The human chameleon lifted one hand slowly, let it glide to a bell button... Oddly, his finger did not actually press the button... Nevertheless, the summons was answered by one of Twindell's husky servants... The thing in gray... moved into the house. [13]

Physically courageous, Shiwan Khan is also physically strong, as The Shadow discovers when, at the end of a long trail of rubies, porcelain dragons, Mongol knife fighters, and the beautiful kidnapped daughter of a munitions maker, he and the Golden Master meet in hand-to-hand combat aboard a racing speedboat in a literally explosive climax in New York Harbor.

The story is a better than average Shadow novel, though somewhat flawed by a lack of balance. The opening chapters treat a few events at some length, while the closing ones deal with so much so briefly that the last few pages read almost like a synopsis. The novel is graced by one of the most beautiful and striking cover paintings ever done in the pulps, a symphony in brown and gold by artist Graves Gladney, depicting Shiwan Khan on a golden throne, vividly alive and ready to reach for your throat.

Both the Shadow and the reader were left wondering at the end of the novel if Shiwan Khan had survived that last explosive encounter; but the reader at least had not long to wonder. Less than an inch below the end of the story, the magazine's editorial staff considerately assured the audience that "Shiwan Khan has made his escape---he will be back again." [14]

The Shadow of Ying Ko

When "Shiwan Khan Returns" (*The Shadow*, December 1, 1939), it is in disguise and with new methods and greater caution. The error that led to the uncovering of his headquarters has been corrected; the overconfidence---shown when he did not even ask a captured Shadow agent the identity of his employer---is gone. In fact, the change is such that The Shadow is fortunate to survive his first clash with the reorganized forces of the Golden Master.

Something strange is happening to well-known inventor Howard Felber, currently designing an all-terrain car that can be driven through scorching sandstorms and icy blizzards with equal ease. At the rhythmic rattle of a passing El train, Felber's eyes glaze, his head tilts as if he were listening to a voice no human ears can hear---and then he redesigns the car so that it can't be steered!

Worried, his fiancee writes to Lamont Cranston, famous explorer and wealthy man-about-town, unaware that Cranston is a cover identity of The Shadow. The she realizes that someone has entered her apartment while she was gone: her aeolian harp, its ten strings operated by the wind, has been moved; it is now on the sill of an open window.

> Outside, a night breeze was stirring, its fitful impulse gaining a steady strength. The spirit of the breeze was registered by the harp... It's strings ... faded into ... the tinkle of sylvan bells.
>
> From the window, Marjorie saw the lights of Manhattan---a myriad array of forceful glow ... in keeping with the harp's proud melody. Then they were gnome lights dancing in the distance, as the easing breeze swept lighter music...
>
> The dreamy lilt of vague and distant song... faded; she listened, intent, hoping it would return.
>
> Then came the voice... The voice spoke thought words. They were in no language, yet she understood them. [15]

The voice, it need hardly be said, of Shiwan Khan. When The Shadow arrives, the girl has disappeared---and he steps into a trap set by three killers from the Khyber, Afghan tribesmen who are the deadliest man-trackers in the world. Injured and bleeding, The Shadow drives off his attackers, but finds his escape blocked by more numerous opponents against whom he cannot use his guns. Shiwan Khan, with the simplicity of genius, has simply picked up the phone and called the police. The war between The Shadow and the Golden Master is conducted as much with brains as with brawn.

The Shadow, "a blot of blackness---a strange, sinister shape that had the ability to blend with gloom" [16], investigates a case filled with both puzzles and violent action. Why is Shiwan Khan trying to steal inventions that don't work? Why does he apparently try to ensure that they are poorly designed? How did a giant bathyscape, with walls far too light to resist the pressure of the depths for which it was supposedly designed, disappear from its

second-floor workshop? How could a man suffocate in a room with an air outlet and with hundreds of electric fans going at high speed? After being beaten nearly to death by a giant Mongol almost twice his size, The Shadow finds the answers in a climax of gunfire and flashing knives. But the Golden Master escapes. And he carries with him half of what he came for, even though the way to his final secret goal is blocked.

The story is almost as good as its predecessor. The interior illustrations by Edd Cartier which enhance all four of the Golden Master novels are especially effective here.

"The Invincible Shiwan Khan" (*The Shadow*, March 1,1940) has good reason for thinking he is so, and he demonstrates his power as never before in this third battle. Not only is most of his mission successfully completed before The Shadow even discovers that he has returned, but his first action against his enemy shows that somehow Shiwan Khan has realized that Lamont Cranston and The Shadow are one and the same man.

The novel opens colorfully in Shiwan Khan's throne room:

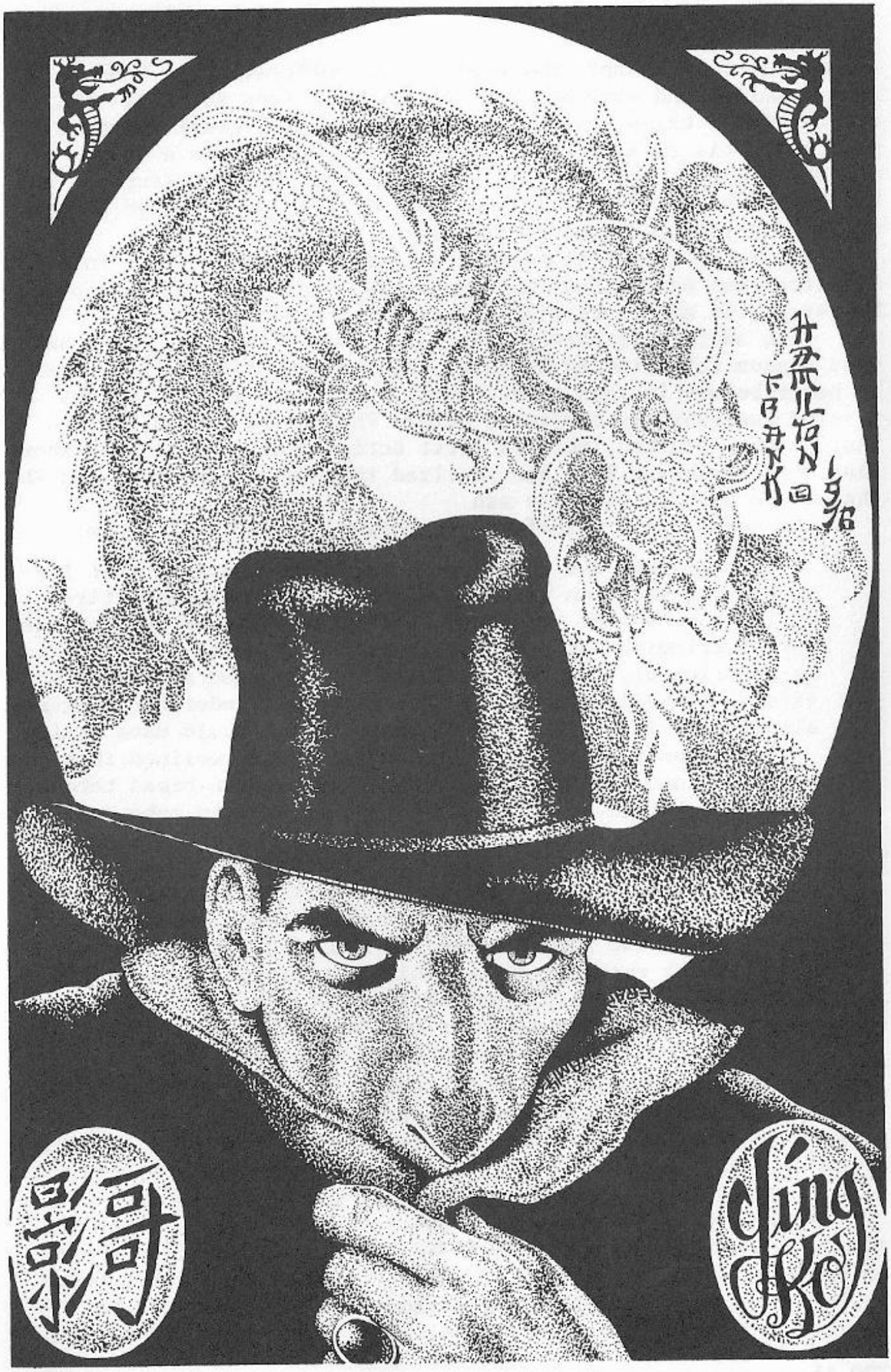
> Strange was the golden room, singular the hush that lay within its squarish walls... Golden, too, was the attire of the room's lone occupant ... its hue relieved only by the purple trimmings of a kingly jacket... His face placed him as an Oriental. Saffron in shade, it produced a chameleon effect, blending with the golden light to render his features almost colorless ... features that a Satan could have envied.
>
> The monstrous master of the golden room reclined in a gilded throne... His body, slanted across the broad throne, looked snakelike in the folds of the ornamented robe. [17]

He snaps a vial in his long-nailed hands and

> Instantly, the ... room was filled with the perfume of lilacs. Cat-like eyes fixed in a glistening stare.
>
> "I am Shiwan Khan," spoke the man in gold. He paused...
>
> The hush returned to the golden room; yet, from his expression, Shiwan Khan seemed to catch the faint hum of a city's roar. It was as if he had cast a mental message upon the wind, and all New York had answered! [18]

Far away in Penn Station, beautiful Beatrice Chadbury breathes the perfume of her lilac bouquet; her eyes glaze, and she says "I hear ... I shall obey" [19] and is gone before her fiance, Paul Brent, realizes that she was speaking to someone only she could hear, a dreaded personage he had hoped never to see again.

Rushing to her apartment, Brent triggers a trap set for The Shadow. Both come close to death in their battle against one of Shiwan Khan's newest henchmen, a deadly fighter from Tibet whose training has made him almost impervious to pain, and able to deliver shocks like an electric eel: a *naljorpa* who can only be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commanded by one who has reached the standing of a living god, a *tulku* of Tibet. Shiwan Khan, obviously, has more than reached this rank.

Beatrice is missing, and she is not the only one. The disappearances are nationwide: men of genius, great inventors, financial wizards, famous doctors, beautiful actresses, government administrators have vanished, some camouflaging their disappearances with stories of false travels. Why go to the trouble of stealing war machines or the plans for newer, more advanced ones, when you can have the makers of them working for you alone? But for such tasks the unforced, unpressured cooperation of such people is necessary. How do you get such people, rich and famous and successful, to leave their country forever? Shiwan Khan has what is perhaps his finest hour when he faces the test of Felix Bryson, a millionaire whose luxurious yacht is needed for his plans.

You claim to be a genius, a great man, says Bryson. If so, you can answer this question. I have health, wealth, relative youth, all that money can buy. What do I desire more than anything else in the world?

> "I warn you..." affirmed Bryson. "I am still master here. If the test fails, I shall inform the authorities [where the] missing persons are... Only if the test succeeds, will I acknorledge Shiwan Khan as the unfathomable being that he claims." [20]

What do you give the man who has everything? Shiwan Khan knows ...and proves he is more than a common criminal when a pretty girl in Chinese dress comes aboard the yacht, carrying the answer to Bryson's question in a small ivory box, stamped with Shiwan Khan's seal.

How can you infiltrate an agent into the organization of a man who can read the mind of each new employee? The Shadow knows... and Ming Dwan, a Chinese-born American girl, enters the secret service of Shiwan Khan.

The Shadow finally manages another face-to-face encounter with the Golden Master, and learns how tricky the latter can be. With Shiwan Khan unarmed and within hand's reach of eight plainclothesmen, The Shadow opens fire at point-blank range---and discovers, the hard way, the real reason why Shiwan Khan lolls on his golden throne.

Facing high-explosive bombs, trapped in the roaring fires of an underground hideout, The Shadow battles to prevent Shiwan Khan from taking his followers on the promised golden journey to Xanadu ---"my hidden city in the heart of Asia. There, through measureless, deathless years we shall create a new dominion that will spread to all the world." [21] The novel climaxes in a battle royal aboard a yacht sweeping out to sea, against the background of a burning city at night.

The Shadow of Ying Ko

Easily the best of the four novels, this story might almost have been written in Technicolor, opening in a golden haze and filled with scenes of orange-red fires against which the black shape of The Shadow is silhouetted. The novel is well-balanced, each scene having its proper length, and the end is unusual: Shiwan Khan succeeds in accomplishing at least half of his mission, and the more important half at that! Round three ends in a draw for The Shadow.

When the "Masters of Death" (*The Shadow*, May 15, 1940) meet again, each is determined that it will be for the last time. Shiwan Khan, who first underestimated his enemy and lost all---second, awaited his enemy's attack with improved defenses and lost much---thirdly, kept his operations secret from his enemy and struck only at the eleventh hour, losing less than half of his goal---has now decided to strike at The Shadow first of all, as the beginning step in a new plan of conquest, that of the United States itself.

One of the exhibits arriving late at night at the Oriental Museum isn't what the curators ordered. One recognizes it for the incredibly rare and valuable object it is: the long-lost massive silver coffin of Temujin, the Perfect Warrior---"The true name of Genghis Khan, the great war lord of the Middle Ages, who ruled half the world with his powerful Mongol hordes! ...these engraved designs, the curve of the coffin's lid. They match the description given by the Belgian missionaries who saw the coffin of Temujin in the region of the Ordos Desert, half a century ago." [22]

The owner of this great relic is entitled to call himself Kha Khan, the Great Ruler of all the world. Remembering that Shiwan Khan's "hidden kingdom of Xanadu, somewhere in Sinkiang, ... is west of Mongolia, and therefore on the route that the coffin must have followed" [23], the curator calls Lamont Cranston, expert in the ways of the East and of the Golden Master.

That knowledge saves Cranston's life when murder strikes twice from the silver coffin. A message from the Golden Master offers to spare Cranston's life if he will take the next plane out of the country and stay out. "His offer ... was bona fide. When Shiwan Khan made a guarantee, he kept it; in a sense, that policy was the basis of the Golden Master's power." [24]

Going openly to the airport, The Shadow succeeds in tricking his watchers when another plane lands, bringing Bryson back from the East in a stretcher. But the battle lines are drawn.

> "Shiwan Khan as left Xanadu," declared The Shadow in a low, strange whisper... . "He is in New York."
>
> Despite The Shadow's presence, Sayre could not repress a shudder.
>
> "Take good care of Bryson," ordered The Shadow... "Shiwan Khan must not know he has returned." ...
>
> The Shadow reached the rear of the ambulance...
>
> "When Shiwan Khan meets opposition," declared The Shadow

> in a strange, sibilant tone, "he robs persons of their reason, and their identities... I can afford neither loss, not even temporarily. But I shall avoid such experience. My intelligence is equal to Shiwan Khan's! My identity"---The Shadow's tone carried a touch of whispered mirth---"is my own secret.
>
> "I know the limitations of Shiwan Khan, as well as the extent of his powers. This is to be my own campaign, against a foe whose methods brook no quarter. It will be a battle to the death!"
>
> There was farewell in The Shadow's grip, despite its firmness. [25]

Slowly Shiwan Khan's master plan becomes apparent: to unite the underworld under a single commanding hand, his own. First making crime the largest and most profitable industry in the country, he will then use his criminal gangs to take over the entire nation. In other countries, criminal organizations hunted by the government have become the government; the plan can work---unless The Shadow can crush the bud before it becomes a flower.

Unfortunately, the Golden Master has one unstoppable card---any of his followers who are killed will live again, for Shiwan Khan can bring the dead back to life, as he proves in a dramatic scene before the assembled lords of the underworld of New York City.

The Shadow, in his true identity of aviator Kent Allard, once worshipped as a living god when his plane crashed among Indians of a lost kingdom in the wilds of Guatemala, battles through high explosives, bank robberies and poison gas, from his black-draped, blue-lit sanctum to the throne room beyond the golden door, to face his opponent for the last time in the midst of a roaring fire.

The most openly fantastic of the series, this novel is the weakest of the four, perhaps because the elements of the supernatural and the criminal do not mix as well here as before.

Gibson tells his tales of sluggings, shootouts, shattering explosions, and house-high holocausts in a cool, detached prose that keeps the reader's emotions at a careful arm's length. It seems a beculiar style for melodramatic hero-pulp thrillers, until you realize what Gibson is doing.

Basically, Gibson is a sports reporter, accurately describing the strategy, tactics and round-by-round punches of two contenders for the championship. It is not that Gibson is unaware of the pain, fury and desperation of the fighters; he knows that punches hurt, that fighters are humans who feel fear, triumph and loss---but he does not mention these feelings because they are not basically what he is writing about. He is merely describing the fight, round by round.

The technique paid off. *The Shadow* magazine ran for 325 issues, from April 1931 to Summer 1949, and Gibson wrote 285 of its featured novels.

III.

Shiwan Khan was perhaps the most popular master fiend ever faced by The Shadow, the only one of Gibson's villains to battle the crime fighter as many as four times and one of only two criminals deadly enough to survive more than three duels and return for a fourth try.[¤] (The other, Benedict Stark, the Prince of Evil, was the creation of another writer, Theodore Tinsley, using the Maxwell Grant penname.)

What accounts for Shiwan Khan's lasting popularity? Partly Gibson's skill in creating colorful figures, of course; but he designed the Golden Master along the lines of an already lasting and popular model: Fu Manchu.

The fascinating figure of the black magician of the Dark Ages, who uses his arcane knowledge for evil, reappeared in the Twentieth Century in the guise of the mad scientist. The insidious Dr. Fu Manchu was a prominent member of that school; indeed, considering the fame he achieved since his arrival in 1912, he might even have been its principal. Founded by H. G. Wells's Dr. Moreau, who carried out some rather advanced experiments in vivisection, without anaesthetics (*The Island of Dr. Moreau*, 1896), and Griffin, the physics researcher of University College who became *The Invisible Man* (1897), its class of Oriental Menaces was outstanding. Faithfully modelling themselves after their more famous principal, two even had their own magazines: *Dr. Yen Sin*, the Invisible Peril (three issues in 1936), and *The Mysterious Wu Fang* (seven issues in 1935-6), created by Donald E. Keyhoe and Robert J. Hogan, respectively. Others appeared even more often as the villains in hero pulps; Dr. Chu Ling met *G-8 and His Battle Aces* in eight novels in the 30s. Less frequent but none the less effective fiends were Mr. Lu, the man with the jade brain, who called himself the Blue Scorpion (two novels and a short novel by George F. Worts in *Argosy*); the Dragonman in "Claws of the Golden Dragon" by "Grant Stockbridge" (Norvell W. Page; in *The Spider*, January 1939); the Man from Singapore in "Scourge of the Yellow Fangs" (*The Spider*, April 1937); and Jengis Dhak, Emperor of the Oriental Nations, in "The Green Death Mists" by "Curtis Steele" (Frederick C. Davis; in *Operator #5* for November 1934).

Like these, and many others, Shiwan Khan was moulded to the Fu Manchu pattern. Both are would-be rulers of the world, possessing a large network of secret agents which they do not hesitate to lead personally in the field; both are scientific geniuses with hypnotic powers and the ability to extend life indefinitely.

They even look alike: "Dr. Fu Manchu...perhaps the greatest genius of modern times... . He had a brow like Shakespeare and a

---

¤ The Shadow faced a criminal gang called The Hand five times, but on each occasion he dealt with a different major criminal.

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AFTER
GRAVES GLADNEY '39

face like Satan. Something serpentine, hypnotic, was in his very presence.... those eyes...possessed a viridescence...possible only in the eye of the cat... I studied...their greenness... ." [26] And the word of both is absolutely reliable: "Dr. Fu Manchu...never breaks his word... In this, Forbes, lies his great strength..." [27]

Perhaps the only major differences between them are that Shiwan Khan apparently has no children and, unlike Fu Manchu, has no racial preconceptions. Shiwan Khan does not care what skin color the people he rules possess, so long as he rules.

Some of the reactions of The Shadow to his greatest enemy suggest that there may be another factor that adds to the interest which readers would naturally have in any colorful character---for in his conflict with the Golden Master The Shadow acts unnaturally. He actually attempts murder. In the third novel, when the unarmed Golden Master breaks lose from eight plainclothesmen struggling with him, The Shadow immediate opens fire. "His gun tongued flame. It was a close-ranged shot, the sort that never should have missed; but the bullet was wide by the fraction of an inch...enough to preserve the life of Shiwan Khan." [28]

Was this an unintended accident, a hasty act committed unthinkingly in the heat and excitement of combat? No; The Shadow is a veteran of long experience in this sort of gunplay. His calmness in combat is demonstrated in, for one example, the running gunfight that climaxes "The Masked Lady" (*The Shadow*, October 15,1939). Here The Shadow mortally wounds the villain, and deliberately withholds his fire as the dying criminal tries to lift a gun, calculating coolly---and accurately---that the criminal will not be able to bring the gun to bear on its target. This is hardly the action of a trigger-happy or blood-thirsty man.

In the fourth novel The Shadow tells his friend Dr. Sayre that he intends this next battle with Shiwan Khan to be "to the death" [29]. There will be no arrest and trial; The Shadow intends deliberate, premeditated murder---for him a highly unusual, possibly unique, act.

The feeling seems to be reciprocated. Prior to their third clash Shiwan Khan had struck at The Shadow only when the latter interfered in his operations. In the third battle, however, though The Shadow is not hampering the Golden Master's activities, and in fact has no idea that they are going on, Shiwan Khan tries to kill him when those activities are nearly concluded---a gratuitous act that proves to be very expensive for the Golden Master.

What caused this change? Well, their first battle is almost over before either has learned more about the other than his name, but by the third clash each has discovered more of the other's history, methods and goals. (Shiwan Khan has even learned the carefully-guarded secret of The Shadow's major cover identity.) And what they have learned about each other may well have caused the change in attitide, from a professional, impersonal adversary relationship to a deeply personal, literally murderous hatred.

This analysis suggests that the conclusion reached by Will Murray in his excellent article "Reflections in a Flake-Gold Eye" (*The Doc Savage Reader*, Spring 1973), about Doc Savage's reaction to John Sunlight, applies also to The Shadow and Shiwan Khan. For there are striking similarities between The Shadow and the Golden Master.

In his very first appearance Shiwan Khan wears grey clothes that blend with the evening shadows, making him almost invisible, "a human chameleon" [30], and reminding the reader of The Shadow. Both have a habit of wearing clothes that blend with their surroundings and act like camouflage, the Golden Master wearing golden robes in his golden room, The Shadow wearing his famous black garb for night-time excursions.

Both have networks of devoted secret agents and lead them personally in the field. Both have considerable physical strength: "Shiwan Khan met The Shadow near the stern, flung him back against the rail. Hands that made steel seem pliable went for The Shadow's throat... The Shadow thrust his own hands for Shiwan Khan's neck. The man who sought mastery of all the world was to learn of conquest delivered by a single foe. The Shadow's clutch was velvet, with solid steel beneath!" [31]

Both customarily use the same tactic of turning an enemy's trap against him; it is this which ultimately enables The Shadow to defeat Shiwan Khan. Both use intelligence as well as force in their struggle. Both have hypnotic ability, though that of The Shadow cannot begin to match the mechanically intensified powers of the Golden Master. Both have headquarters rooms draped in the color of their costumes.

By an even more unusual coincidence, both are rulers of secret kingdoms of their own where each is worshipped as a living god: Shiwan Khan as a *tulku* in the hidden city of Xanadu, somewhere under the deserts of Mongolia, and The Shadow as white god of a lost tribe of Xinca Indians in a hidden valley in the wild fastnesses of Guatemala.

The golden Shiwan Khan, the black Shadow, are mirror images of each other. Each sees in the other what he might have been had his development been different, and only slightly different at that. If The Shadow had turned to a career of crime and personal ambition, he might well have followed the same path as Shiwan Khan. An intelligent man, the thought must have occurred to him; and judging by the murderous intensity of his reaction to Shiwan Khan, it must have been more than a mere possibility---it must have been a temptation.

He fought it down, partly by repressing the temptation and partly by giving it a modified outlet: many of the acts which The Shadow performs to fight crime are criminal in themselves, and he is wanted by the police of many nations. (Note, too, that most of the acts performed by Shiwan Khan in the third battle, especially the acts which will most effectively bring about the world-controlling empire he wishes to set up, are quite legal and proper. Note

Shiwan Khan as pictured by Erwin L. Hess in *The Shadow and the Master of Evil*, a Better Little Book (Whitman Publishing Co., Racine, Wis.), 1941. Copyright by Street & Smith Publications, 1941.

Edd Cartier's version of Shiwan Khan, from "The Golden Master", *The Shadow*, September 15, 1939. Copyright 1939 by Street & Smith Publications.

too the almost fanatic honesty with which he keeps his word once it is given, an honesty far beyond that of most people.)

With the increasing knowledge he acquires of Shiwan Khan, a man of The Shadow's intelligence must easily have recognized the growing number of similarities between them---and that old struggle was reborn. Both The Shadow and the Golden Master saw in the other what each might have been, and once, long ago, had been strongly tempted to be. What The Shadow really wanted to murder was not so much another human being as an inner impulse, a temptation that would have destroyed everything he stood for and spent his life working for. Both fight not only against the other, but against their own inner wish, a traitor hidden in the heart itself. No wonder the battle was, for both of them, a struggle to the death.

IV.

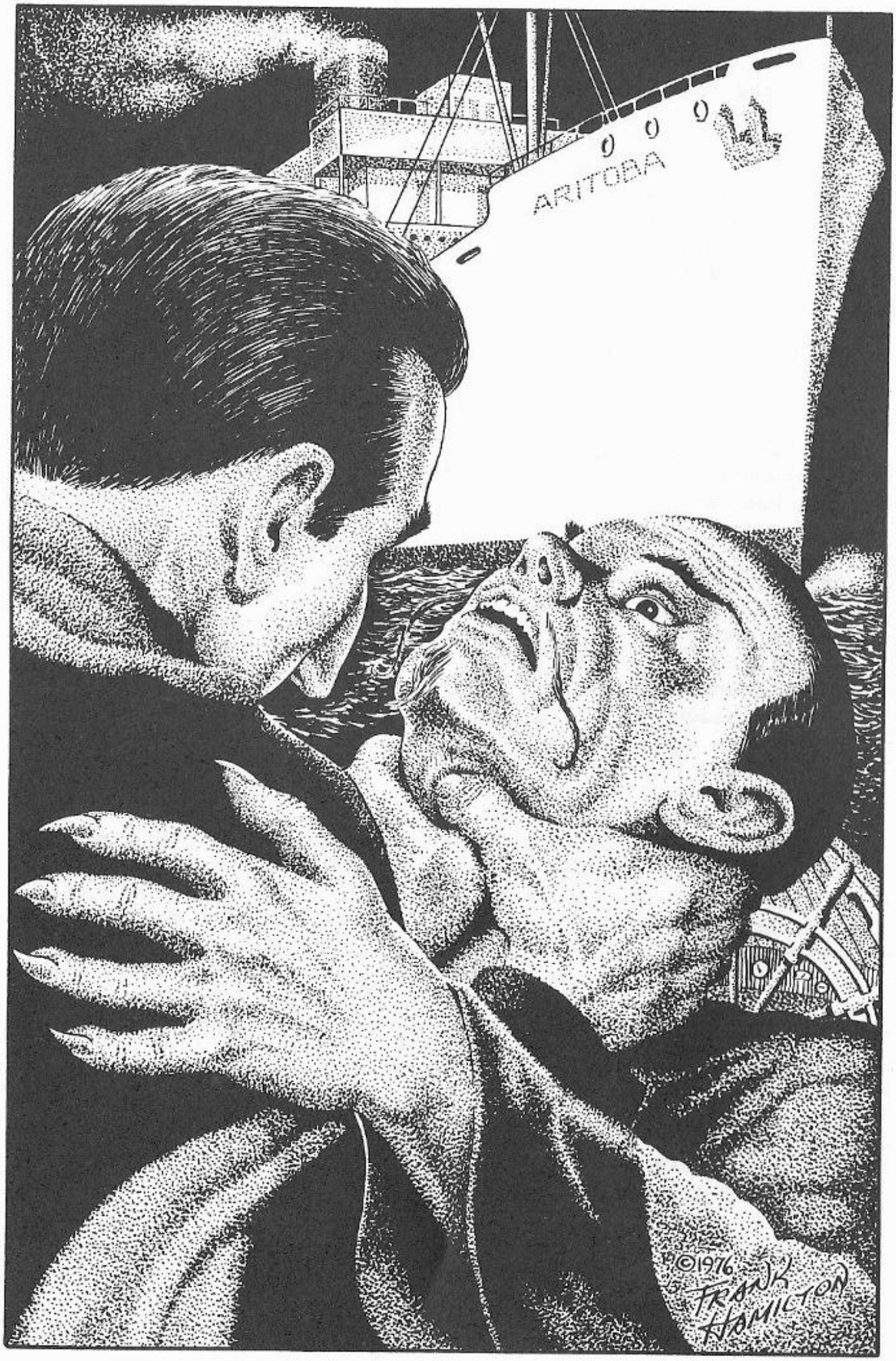
Murray pointed out that this was why Doc Savage was so shaken by his opponent, the insane John Sunlight, the only criminal Savage ever met who had the same high I.Q., the same immense physical strength, wore the same kind of all-one-color clothes as Savage, and even used the same unusual weapons and devices as Savage. "We see in him, as Doc does, an evil mirror image of Doc Savage himself." [32] Sunlight is what Savage might have been, if his mind had broken under the inhumanly severe training given him as a child. (Such training did, in fact, produce a nervous breakdown in at least one young subject, William Boris Sidis, Jr.[¤])

Let us widen Murray's conclusion and apply it to all such conflicts between heroes and great antagonists: they recognize mirror images of themselves in each other; each is what the other might have been, and their struggle is the more bitter because of such recognition.

The reader is not given a great deal of information about Nero Wolfe's great opponent, Arnold Zeck, who appears mostly as a voice on the telephone and in two brief scenes in one novel; but what there is supports the Murray Thesis. Each recognizes in the other an antagonist of his own high quality. Zeck tells Archie, "There was one man who matched me in intellect---the man you worked for, Nero Wolfe" [33]; and Wolfe calls Zeck "the most dangerous man in America" [34] and warns Archie what is likely to happen if they collide head-on: "one or both of us will probably get killed." [35] Both operate through a band of agents, Zeck's mostly full-time criminals and Wolfe's part-time detectives and full-time assistant. Both are precise grammarians, using words accurately themselves and insisting that others do the same.

That the great enemy tempts repressed criminal wishes in the

¤ A brief account of Sidis's life can be found in *The Natural History of Nonsense* by Bergen Evans, Vintage, 1958, pp. 172-3.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hero is strongly suggested by Wolfe's statement: "he is the only man on earth that I'm afraid of. I'm not afraid he'll hurt me; I'm afraid of what he may someday force me to do to keep him from hurting me." [36]

That this is no idle statement is shown when the final battle begins a few years later. Wolfe commits crimes in order to infiltrate and rise in Zeck's organization: "with a temporary abandonment of scruples, I made a substantial impression...with a device I conceived for getting considerable sums of money from ten different people simultaneously, with a minimum of risk." [37] This is an act strongly out of character for Wolfe.

And worse, for the first and only time in their lives, Wolfe and Archie plan a deliberate and premeditated murder. As with The Shadow, Wolfe will not even try to have his enemy arrested. There will be no trial. "If all we needed were evidence of Zeck's complicity in felonies, that would be no problem... I could get it. But his defenses are everywhere, making him next to invulnerable. It would be fatuous to suppose that he could ever be convicted, and even if he were, he would still be living, so that wouldn't help any. Now that I am committed against him, and he knows it, there are only two possible outcomes..." [38]

At the climax a cold-blooded, carefully planned killing occurs, done deliberately and skillfully by Wolfe and Archie, though proving it in court would be close to impossible.

The same reactions can be seen in the relationship between Holmes and that Napoleon of Crime, Prof. Moriarty. Both have enough in common to make it easy for each to identify with the other. Both are geniuses, at the top of their respective fields. Both have a strong, if secondary, interest in science: chemistry for Holmes and mathematics for Moriarty. Both have a network of agents: Moriarty's a gang of full-time crooks and Holmes's a collection of street urchins, the Baker Street Irregulars, whom he employs on occasion for minor tasks. Holmes calls Moriarty "the greatest schemer of all time...a brain which might have made or marred the destiny of nations" [39]; Moriarty says admiringly of his enemy, "It has been an intellectual treat to me to see the way you have grappled with this affair." [40] Holmes sees in Moriarty what he himself would have been if he had turned his talents to crime instead of detection; and vice versa.

Unlike Wolfe and The Shadow, Holmes does not descend to criminal acts to eliminate his greatest opponent. But the repressed criminality that such an opponent tempts to the surface is shown by one of Holmes's acts before the final battle begins. Convinced that a letter calling Watson away is a trick of Moriarty's to get him alone, he deliberately says nothing in the hope that Moriarty will then engage him in a murderous hand-to-hand combat. If he kills Moriarty under such conditions the act will be self-defense. There will be no arrest, no trial, no jury---just killing. In a last letter to Watson, he writes, "If I may make a full confession

to you, I was quite convinced that the letter...was a hoax, and I allowed you to depart...under the persuasion that some development of this sort would follow." [41] He then turns to the waiting Prof. Moriarty and their final, dreadful battle begins, on a slippery ledge high above the roaring waterfall of the Reichenbach.

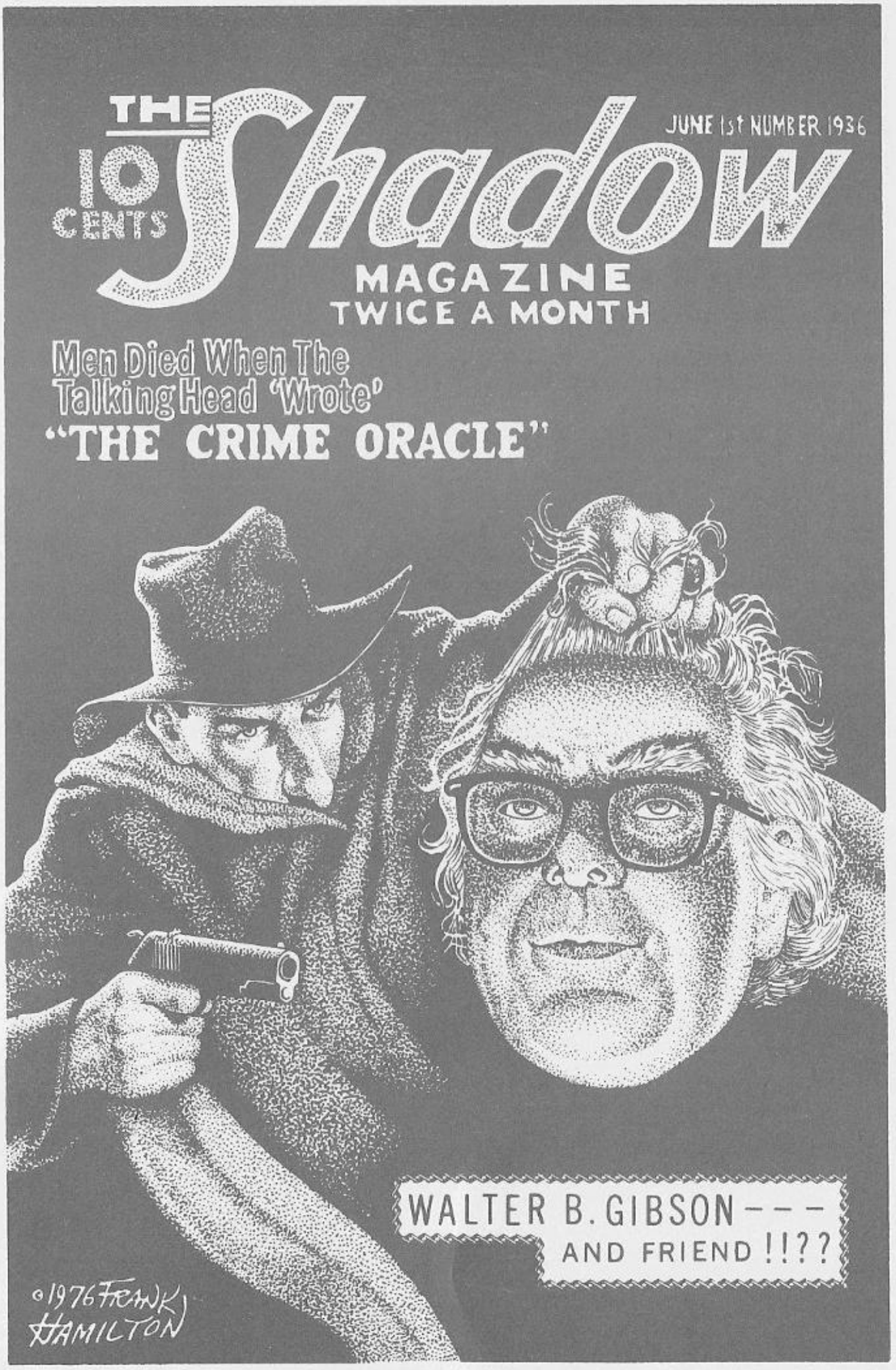
We see, then, that the Golden Master, who battled so long and so hard against the man the Chinese called Ying Ko, was indeed the shadow of Ying Ko. And we see why any hero's struggle with his greatest antagonist has an epic quality: the greatest and most dangerous opponent is always oneself.

¤ ¤ ¤ ¤ ¤ ¤ ¤ ¤ ¤ ¤ ¤ ¤

NOTES

1. "The Final Problem", in *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* by A. Conan Doyle, Garden City, 1938, pp. 544-5.
2. Ibid, p. 546.
3. Ibid, pp. 546-7.
4. Cover of *In the Best Families* by Rex Stout, Viking, 1950.
5. *The Second Confession* by Rex Stout, Viking, 1949, p. 67.
6. Ibid, p. 15.
7. "The Fortress of Solitude" by "Kenneth Robeson" [Lester Dent], *Doc Savage*, October 1938, p. 12.
8. Ibid, p. 11.
9. Ibid, p. 36.
10. Ibid, p. 53.
11. "The Golden Master" by "Maxwell Grant" [Walter B. Gibson], *The Shadow*, September 15, 1939, pp. 33-4.
12. Ibid, p. 109.
13. Ibid, p. 32.
14. Ibid, p. 130.
15. "Shiwan Khan Returns" by "Maxwell Grant" [Walter B. Gibson], *The Shadow*, December 1, 1939, p. 14.
16. Ibid, p. 18.
17. "The Invincible Shiwan Khan" by "Maxwell Grant" [Walter B. Gibson], *The Shadow*, March 1, 1940, pp. 9-10.
18. Ibid, p. 10.
19. Ibid, p. 11-12.
20. Ibid, p. 64.
21. Ibid, p. 20.
22. "Masters of Death" by "Maxwell Grant" [Walter B. Gibson], *The Shadow*, May 15, 1940, p. 11.
23. Ibid, p. 12.
24. Ibid, p. 21.
25. Ibid, p. 28.

26. *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* by Sax Rohmer, McBride, 1913, pp. 168-9.
27. "The Word of Fu Manchu", in *The Wrath of Fu Manchu and Other Stories* by Sax Rohmer, Tom Stacey Ltd., 1973, p. 83.
28. "The Invincible Shiwan Khan", op. cit., p. 77.
29. "Masters of Death", op. cit., p. 28.
30. "The Golden Master", op. cit., p. 32.
31. Ibid, p. 128.
32. "Reflections in a Flake-Gold Eye" by Will Murray, in *The Doc Savage Reader*, Spring 1973, p. 19.
33. *In the Best Families* by Rex Stout, Viking, 1950, p. 194.
34. Ibid, dust jacket.
35. Ibid, p. 21.
36. *The Second Confession* by Rex Stout, Viking, 1949, p. 142.
37. *In the Best Families*, op. cit., p. 146.
38. Ibid, p. 147.
39. "The Valley of Fear", in *The Complete Sherlock Holmes*, p. 904.
40. "The Final Problem", op. cit., p. 546.
41. Ibid, p. 555.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